

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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UNCLAS HONG KONG 9650

FOR PGM/RC ICA/EA FROM ICA HONG KONG.
SECSTATE PLEASE PASS TO CHRIS NELSON, HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS.

E.O. 11652: N/A

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF EDITORIAL ENTITLED PEKING WORRIES
APPEARING IN JULY 21 HONGKONG STANDARD.

(BEGIN TEXT)

ONE MAY BE FORGIVEN IF ONE DETECTS A RING OF HYSTERIA IN THE
LATEST CHINESE BLAST AT TAIWAN, THE 30-YEAR-OLD PROBLEM WHICH CHINA
SEEMS IN NO HURRY TO SOLVE. AND COMING CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF A
STATEMENT FROM CONGRESSMAN LESTER WOLFF ONE WOULD SUSPECT THE
WELL-MEANING CONGRESSMAN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN SETTING OFF THE
PEKING BLAST. MR. WOLFF TALKED OF A "NEW SENSE OF REALISM" IN
PEKING WHERE TOP PARTY OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM THAT CHINA
WAS WILLING TO TALK IT OVER WITH TAIWAN. THIS IN ITSELF IS NOT
STARTLINGLY NEW. BUT THE TIMING OF IT SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT
PEKING WAS ANXIOUS TO ASSURE THE AMERICANS THAT A PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT OF THE TAIWAN ISSUE IS POSSIBLE. THAT PEKING IS NOT
TOO KEEN ON A SETTLEMENT BY FORCE.

THE VIOLENT STATEMENT FROM PEKING WOULD SEEM TO NEGATE ALL THAT.
PERHAPS MR. WOLFF SAID THE WRONG THING AT THE WRONG TIME AND
PLACE. PERHAPS PEKING WANTED TO UNDERSCORE TO THE WORLD THAT
WHATEVER THEIR INTENTIONS ABOUT TAIWAN THE WORLD SHOULD NOT
TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED. THAT IT IS A CHINESE PROBLEM TO BE
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SOLVED BY THE CHINESE WITH NO OUTSIDE PARTICIPATION.
IT WOULD HOWEVER APPEAR THAT PRESIDENT CHIANG CHING-KUO IS NOT
ONE WITH WHOM PEKING WOULD START A DIALOGUE. THE COMMENTARY
FROM NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY WHICH CASTIGATES HIM FOR HAVING
"TAKEN A STAND OF IMPLACABLE HOSTILITY TO ALL THE CHINESE PEOPLE"
WOULD SUGGEST THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THE
REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT CHIANG.

AND IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO DISMISS THE PEKING CHARGE THAT TAIWAN PRESS HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT "UNITING WITH THE RUSSIANS" OR OBTAINING "RUSSIAN HELP." SUCH STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE TAIWAN PRESS BUT OUTSIDE WORLD HAS TENDED TO DISMISS THEM AS PROVOCATIVE TALK TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS FROM THE AMERICANS. BUT WITH A COMPLETE U.S. DISENGAGEMENT FROM TAIWAN A CERTAINTY, TAIWAN IS BARGAINING HARD FOR THE RIGHT PRICE FOR THE DISENGAGEMENT. IT HAS ALREADY REFUSED THE ISRAELI Kfir FIGHTER AND IS APPARENTLY HOLDING OUT FOR SUBSTANTIAL AND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY FROM THE U.S. TAIWAN IS KEEPING ALL ITS OPTIONS OPEN. THEY MAY NOT BE THINKING OF ESTABLISHING OVERNIGHT AN ALLIANCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION BUT GIVEN PEKING'S HOSTILITY TO MOSCOW AND THE MIGHT OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES TAIPEI MAY BE MAKING OVERTURES TO MOSCOW.

IF THE SOVIET UNION EVER GETS A Foothold across the TAIWAN STRAITS ONE CAN SAFELY PREDICT A DOOMSDAY SCENARIO FOR THE REGION. PEKING MAY BE EXPRESSING SOME GENUINE FEARS WHEN IT ACCUSES CHIANG CHING-KUO OF NATIONAL BETRAYAL AND CURRYING "FAVOUR WITH FOREIGNERS". END TEXT
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